

In theaters “Skyfall”



By Macario Mora



I'm young, relatively, so I can admit my first James Bond movie starred Pierce Brosnan. The franchise has rolled out 23 installments in 50 years, so I'd be remiss to say I've seen every film. I hear Mr. Connery was as good as it gets, but “Skyfall” on its own, is one heck of a movie. Sam Mendes' incarnation of Ian Fleming's 007 is reminiscent of Christopher Nolan's recent Batman trilogy in that Bond, James Bond, has been transformed from a cheesy, campy caricature into a more brooding, dark and realistic character who wears the scars of a man who has single-handedly saved Great Britain for 50 years.

From the start “Skyfall” kept a riveting pace with your quintessential car chases and well choreographed fight scenes. Bond (Daniel Craig) with the help of a fellow MI6 agent Eve (Naomie Harris) desperately chase a terrorist who has stolen information containing the identities of NATO agents secretly operating throughout the globe combating terrorism. The seemingly invincible spy is brought back down to Earth by a hasty and desperate order given by MI6 commander M (Judi Dench), which results in Eve shooting Bond – this all happens in the opening frame.

Bond understandably perturbed and feeling betrayed, lays low and is enjoying his “death” when a terrorist attack strikes the MI6 headquarters building. His love of country is too strong and he makes his way back to London, but he isn't the same.

The film is wrought with subtleties that hint at questions of modernity such as Bond's encounter with his new quartermaster Q (Ben Whishaw) who quips something to the affect he can do more with his laptop in an hour than Bond can do in the field for an entire year. Bond's age and relevance are questioned throughout the film, even leaving the viewer to ponder if he was a relic of a bygone era.

A considerable amount of time passes before we meet Bond's arch nemesis, but the impact of Javier Bardem's portrayal of cyber-terrorist Raoul Silva is felt from the moment he makes his debut. Bardem, whose villain in “No Country for Old Men” also steals every scene, is far and away Bond's most daunting foe. He looks like the Hispanic progeny of a union between Andy Warhol and a Dutch woman. He isn't physically imposing, but he's able to make Bond squirm in his seat nonetheless.

Silva as we learn is a predecessor to Bond who was left horribly scarred mentally and physically by another of M's unfortunate decisions. Both characters have obvious maternal issues, but they deal with it differently – Bond dutifully obeys M while Raoul is hell-bent on killing her. Silva has spent years if not decades plotting his revenge on MI6 and M, so Bond is playing catch-up throughout the film in an effort to save M and MI6's relevance to England.

The film is beautifully shot, and the acting is top-notch. The story is riveting, and in my humble opinion it's by and far the best Bond film to date – yes, I haven't seen them all, but the movie is that good. However, viewers are left with questioning where the franchise goes from here. Bond is old, beaten and ready for retirement, if not at the beginning of the film certainly at the end after barely defeating his enemy – this is not a spoiler, it's a Bond film and he always triumphs. So, with no uncertainty, Bond fanatics can probably anticipate a franchise reboot, and although this is not Daniel Craig's last go at being James Bond, his will always be a tough act to follow.

“Skyfall” is rated PG-13.